

# ABRO Site Development Brief, Colchester

Colchester Borough Council  
August 2021



GROWTH  
RESPONSIBILITY  
OPPORTUNITY  
WELLBEING



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## The Vision

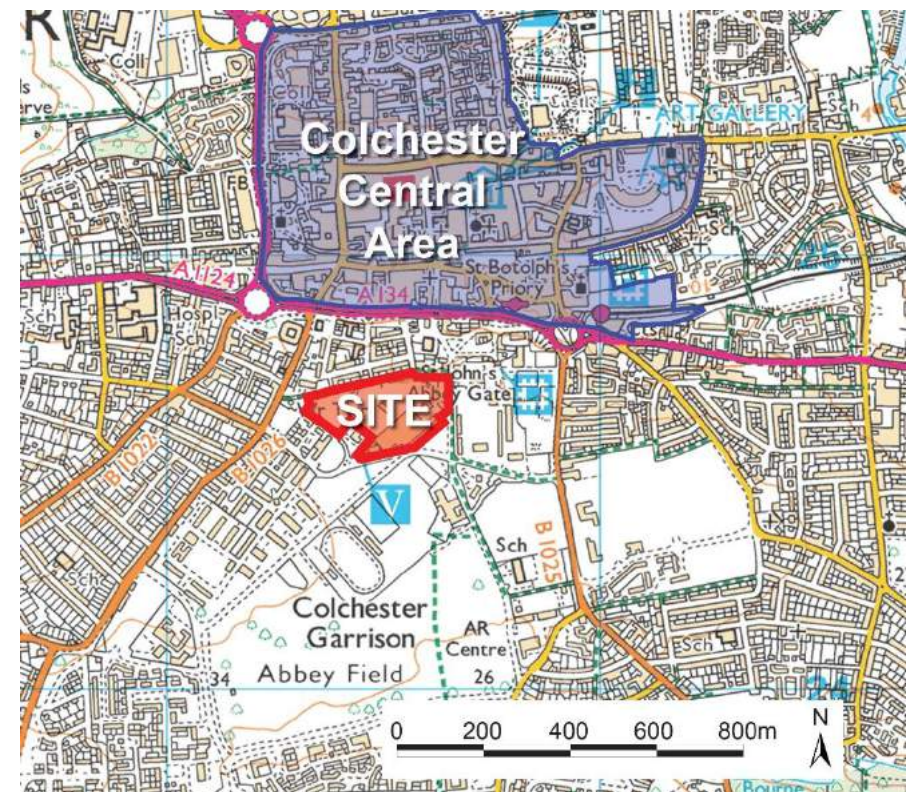
- 1.1 The Council's vision for the site is for a genuinely high-quality residential scheme which is clearly of the 21st century, complementing the area's rich heritage, strong in urban and landscape character, and promoting sustainable travel.

## Background & Purpose

- 1.2 The ABRO site forms part of the Defence Estate albeit was previously leased to Babcock International under a contract with the Ministry of Defence relating to its army vehicle servicing. The site is currently held by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S).
- 1.3 This development brief has been produced by the Planning Team at Colchester Borough Council, working in consultation with key stakeholders and has been the subject of a public consultation exercise.
- 1.4 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on issues and opportunities and sets out the Council's aspirations for the redevelopment of this important site. The document provides a clear and robust development framework, which is intended to help for the smooth delivery of a suitable scheme.
- 1.5 The brief does not provide a full assessment of all the potential site constraints. It does, however, provide a framework for the site's redevelopment whilst identifying areas that would benefit from further investigation.

- 1.6 The brief is structured as follows: The planning policy context is set out in Section 2, which is followed by the site and context analysis (Section 3). Section 4 describes and illustrates key principles in response to identified issues and opportunities. The document concludes with Section 5 which considers development delivery.

## Location & Study Area



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Figure 1: Site Location

1.7 The site is 4.26 hectares, including a 3.80 hectare area allocated for residential use in Part 2 of the Emerging Local Plan. Now vacant, the site was previously part of the Royal Artillery Barracks (latterly known as Le Cateau Barracks), forming a northern most part of the old Colchester Garrison. The site comprises large areas of flattened hard surfacing, with some buildings of mixed size and architectural/historic significance. The northeast corner of the site is former green space converted to car parking in recent times. The Roman Circus Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) extends over the 0.46 hectare southern part of the site and is allocated as open space in the Emerging Local Plan.



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph

1.8 There is a predominantly Victorian urban residential area to the north and west of the site. The more historic St John's Green area lies to the north-east. To the east is the site is the Arena Place development that includes restored Garrison buildings and is covered in part by the remains of St John's Abbey. Both the St John's Green and Arena Place benefit from generous landscaping, including greens and tree-lined avenues. To the south of the site lies the Roman Circus SAM alongside Abbey Field which is the focal green space in the area. A public car park adjoins the site to the south-west, beyond which is Butt Road, a major route leading to the town centre.

1.9 The site is well located in terms of its proximity to the town centre and is therefore able to take advantage of the local services and facilities found within the central area of Colchester.



Examples of developments on the old Garrison:  
Former Sergeants Mess (left) and Circular Road North (right)



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## 2 POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 In accordance with the requirements of the section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 any planning application for the redevelopment of this site will be determined in accordance with planning policies set out in the adopted local plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following highlights key local policies and guidance relevant to the site's development:

### **Adopted Local Plan**

#### Core Strategy (amended 2014)

- 2.2 The site is within the Garrison Growth Area and Regeneration Area. Redevelopment of the Garrison is identified as a key project and reference is made to the approved masterplan. The most relevant policies are:

- SD1: Sustainable Development Locations
- SD2: Delivering Facilities and Infrastructure
- SD3: Community Facilities
- CE1: Centres and Employment Classification and Hierarchy
- H1: Housing Delivery
- UR1: Regeneration Areas

#### Site Allocations DPD

- 2.3 Policy SA GAR1: Development in the Garrison Area advises on land uses having reference to the Garrison Masterplan. It also identifies the need for a north-south green link, which, as

shown on the proposals map, includes Flagstaff Road adjoining the site.

- 2.4 Land to the east and south-east of the site is identified as a Mixed Use Redevelopment allocation named Napier Road (including the former Arena site). Within this area, 'Arena Place' to the east been developed, but the former vacant Arena site (off Circular Road East) remains to be redeveloped.
- 2.5 Paragraphs 5.10 and 5.102 of the Site Allocations DPD discuss the need to protect and preserve the Roman Circus SAM.

#### Development Policies SPD (amended 2014)

- 2.6 The most relevant policies are:
- DP1: Design and Amenity
  - DP3: Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure
  - DP5: Community Facilities
  - DP12: Dwelling Standards
  - DP14: Historic Building Assets
  - DP16: Private Amenity Space and Open Space Provision for New Residential Development
  - DP17: Accessibility and Access
  - DP19: Parking Standards

### **New / Emerging Local Plan.**

- 2.7 The Council is developing a new local plan (Submission Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017-2033). The whole of the emerging Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2017; however, the examination of the two

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sections has taken place separately. Section 1 of this Plan has been found sound and was adopted by the Council on 1 Feb 2021. The examination of Section 2 of the emerging Local Plan was undertaken in spring 2021 and the Council is now waiting for the Inspector's letter.

### Adopted Local Plan (Part 1)

#### 2.8 The most relevant policies are:

- SP6: Place Shaping Principles – encourages development briefs, promotes the highest standards of design and outlines a range of key principles;
- ENV3: Green Infrastructure - supports the Colchester Orbital initiative which identifies Flagstaff Road as a key 'spoke' to the town centre;
- ENV5: Pollution and Contaminated Land – outlines requirements covering assessment and mitigation;
- PP1: Generic Infrastructure and Mitigation Requirements – requires financial contributions for appropriate infrastructure and/or community facilities, and issues and opportunities to be addressed;
- TC4: Transport in Colchester Town Centre – contributions will be sought for the enhancement of Southway / St Botolph's Roundabout

### Emerging Local Plan (Part 2)

#### 2.9 The Local Plan Policies Map identified the majority of the Site for residential use. The southern part of the site is covered by the Roman Circus SAM and is allocated for open space.

#### 2.10 The most relevant policies in the emerging plan are:

- DM1: Health and Wellbeing – developments need to promote healthy lifestyles and avoid adverse impact on public health, with Health Impact Assessments (HIA) required for development in excess of 100 units;
- DM2: Community Facilities - new development will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of community facilities including education;
- DM8: Affordable Housing - 30% of new dwellings should be provided as affordable housing (normally on site);
- DM9: Development Density – promotes densities which support sustainable transport and helps sustain local amenities, though having regard to existing built and landscape character, accessibility, parking, housing mix and residential quality;
- DM10: Housing Diversity – seeks an appropriate range of housing types and tenures, whilst realising opportunities presented by accessible locations;
- DM12: Housing Standards – promotes liveability through a range of standards, including the Nationally Described Space Standards (DCLG, 2015);
- DM15: Design and Amenity – the key urban design policy covering process, functionality, context responsiveness, characterisation, community liveability and sustainability;
- DM16: Historic Environment – expects new development to understand, enhance and help reveal historic assets, remove detrimental features and provide interpretation where appropriate;
- DM17: Retention of Open Space and Recreation Facilities – seeks to protect and enhance the existing network of green links and open spaces, and secure additional areas where deficiencies are identified;

- DM18: Provision of Public Open Space – requires at least 10% of the gross site area to be provided as useable open space;
- DM19: Private Amenity Space – outlines default minimum usable space requirements, and possible exceptions relating to accessible locations and where higher densities may be appropriate;
- DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour – seeks to increase modal shift towards sustainable modes including through improved walking and cycling accessibility and traffic management;
- DM21: Sustainable Access to Development – seeks to encourage walking, cycling and public transport through improved networks and public realm, increased prioritisation, and facilities to support electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles;
- DM22: Parking – parking requirements will consider the Essex Parking Standards alongside levels of local accessibility, car ownership levels, housing mix and types of parking (possibly including car-sharing, a car club and car-free development if appropriate);
- DM24: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems – requires development to incorporate SuDs in accordance with the Essex Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide (2016); and
- DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling – encourages development which helps reduce carbon emissions, uses sustainable construction techniques, increases water efficiencies and promotes recycling.

## **Statutory Legalisation**

- 2.11 The Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) provides statutory protection to monuments that are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). All works affecting a SAM require the consent of the Secretary of State, which is issued through Historic England.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Area) Act (1990) provides statutory protection to listed building and their setting and requires new development to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a designated conservation area.

## **Local and National Planning Policy Guidance**

- 2.12 Proposals for the redevelopment of site will also need to have regard to the following local and national planning policy guidance:
- 2.13 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

### Colchester Garrison Urban Village Master Plan (2001)

- 2.14 The Garrison Master Plan, although now nearly 20 years old nevertheless still contains useful background information and many principles inform the new brief including:
- An attractive and sustainable mixed-use urban community;
  - Highest densities and finer urban grain nearest the town centre;
  - Using historic buildings and landscape features to help instil character;

- Enhancement of Abbey Field at the heart of a green link and open space network, and including a north-south link (involving Flagstaff Road) with the town centre;
- Continuous frontage to enclose and self-police the public realm;
- Designs informed by the Essex Design Guide and offering opportunities for good modern innovative design;
- Traditional materials, though consideration will be given to other high-quality materials on contemporary designs;
- Enhanced walking and cycling networks and priority, including car-free development nearest the town centre and some home zones;
- Improvements and repair to barrack folleys to enhance safety and permeability; and
- Preservation of archaeological remains (in-situ where possible).

#### Colchester Garrison Development Brief: Le Cateau and Cavalry Barracks SPG (2002)

- 2.15 Following on from the Garrison Master Plan, this site specific brief provides more detailed guidance on how these former Barracks should be redeveloped. Like the Master Plan, the SPG provides useful background information and some principles inform the new brief including:
- Densities of 45-50 dwellings per hectare;
  - Domestic scale - predominantly 2-3 storeys;
  - Buildings overlooking Abbey Field to be served by rear parking;
  - For the ABRO site, a home zone with pocket park including LEAP at the heart;

- Diversion of the Public Right of Way currently cutting diagonally across corner of Walsingham Road and Flagstaff Road;
- Public art in key locations;
- Reuse of Infirmary Stables;
- Preservation of the Garrison boundary wall where possible, though breached by new gateways to improve access and safety; and
- Compliance with Anglia Water requirements for the 'camp sewer' ensuring, if it is retained, no buildings are constructed within 3m either side of the outside face.

This brief supersedes the guidance set out in the SPG in respect of the ABRO site.

#### Colchester Roman Circus Management Plan (2021)

- 2.16 This management plan has recently been updated and adopted as a planning guidance document. The aim of the plan is to ensure the appropriate conservation and interpretation of the Colchester Roman Circus. It seeks to inform development proposals, establish a process for interpretation, enhance understanding of the circus and encourage learning.

- 2.17 Key principles in relation to the ABRO site (referred to as 'Site LEC' in the management plan) are:
- No new development or tree planting of any kind on top of the remains of the Roman circus (with the potential exception of a purpose-built cover building and / or associated interpretation items);
  - A buffer zone of 10m from an invisible line from the edge of the monument (across the ends of circus



- buttresses) to ensure no new development including service trenches and vehicle movements;
- Future proposals for new development in the vicinity will be subject to requests for Section 106 agreements to enable the proper public presentation of the circus remains;
- The site of the circus and buffer zones shall be either grassed (in public or private ownership) or existing adopted roads needing to be retained: and
- A detailed interpretation scheme will be drawn up which may include a cover building over part of the exposed remains, interpretation boards, and marking out of as much of the circus course as possible.

#### **Other Relevant Policies and Guidance**

##### **2.18 Other relevant policies and guidance include:**

- Essex Design Guide (1997);
- The Essex Design Guide (concurrent) – this new internet-based guide launched in 2018 is not adopted though is referred to in the Emerging Local Plan and includes up-to-date Highway Authority design standards;
- Essex Parking Standards (2009);
- Essex Coast RAMS (2020)
- Essex Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide (2016);
- Colchester Affordable Housing SPD (2011);
- Colchester Cycling Strategy SPD (2012);
- Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities SPD (2006);
- Provision of Community Facilities (2013)
- Street Services Delivery Strategy (2016)
- Managing Archaeology in Development (2015)

- Colchester Green Infrastructure Strategy (2010) - not adopted though referred to in the Emerging Local Plan; and
- Townscape Character Assessment of Colchester,
- Land Affected by Contamination Technical Guidance for Applicants & Developers;
- Colchester Air Quality Action Plan 2016-2021

#### **Other Documents**

- National Design Guide
- Manual for Streets
- Manual for Streets 2 LTN 1 /20 Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20
- The Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (2020)

### 3 SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

#### Heritage

- 3.1 In 2005, the only known Roman circus in Britain was discovered on the southern outskirts of Colchester town centre. Now a protected Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), part of its remains lie at the southern edge of the ABRO site. The circus dates from the early 2nd century. It was about 450 metres in length, with eight starting gates and could accommodate some 8,000 spectators. The long-term plan for the SAM is to mark-out (as far as possible), open-up and interpret the circus as part of a key visitor attraction for the town. The delivery of this is ongoing and is informed by Roman Circus Management Plan (outlined in Section 2).



CGI of Colchester Roman Circus  
(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Yl6vnmWAjs> )

- 3.2 A Historic Building Assessment Report was produced by Ingram Consultancy in 2000 as part of the now approved outline planning application for the redevelopment of the old Garrison (planning ref: O/COL/01/0009).

- 3.3 The Ingram Report and historic mapping forms the basis for the following analysis; building reference numbers in brackets refers to those in the Ingram report:

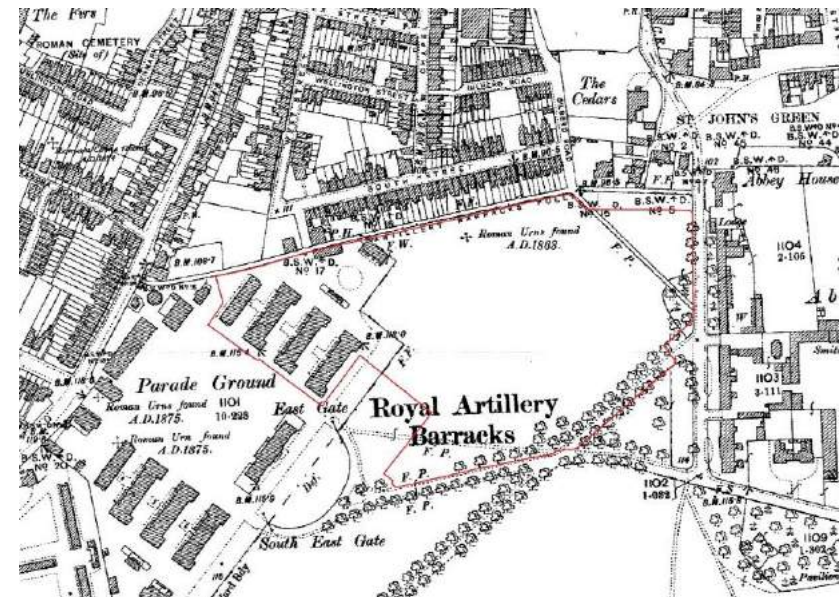


Figure 3: Historic Map (circa 1897-1904)

- 3.4 Royal Artillery Barracks (later known as Le Cateau Barracks) was initially constructed in 1874-75 and enclosed by a 9-10 feet high brick boundary wall with entrance gates on Butt Road and on the south-east side by an iron paling fence with two pairs of gates opening to Abbey Field. One of these gates (East Gate) was located at the end of the existing road serving the Roman Circus Visitor Centre. This initial phase of construction still left much of the ABRO site as part of Abbey Field. The Royal Artillery Barracks centred on a parade ground and included: stable blocks with living quarters



above; officers' quarters; gun sheds; a canteen; a guard house; offices; and a water tower.



Officers' Quarters

- 3.5 Immediately outside the iron paling fence and facing the main façade of the landmark Officers' Quarters was a semi-circular lawn (originally for tennis) and carriageway road. To the north-east were two maneges and lunging circles. The Officers' Quarters which was central and prominent to the barracks complex, adjoins the current ABRO site (to the south-east). The Officers' Quarters is listed grade II and has recently been converted into housing. The semi-circular garden area to the front this building is being retained as amenity space and for the interpretation of the circus.
- 3.6 Within the ABRO site, from the first phase of the garrison development, the Infirmary Stables (IC3), on the northern site edge survives along with the boundary wall to the folley which is distinguished by a white brick semi-circular coping. Artillery Barracks Folley also appears to date from this time and the original paving survives, albeit in a poor condition. The Infirmary Stables, which sits on the boundary wall, shows

seven open boxes with entrances and masonry detailing that reflects the other original Royal Artillery buildings.



Infirmary Stables (left)

- 3.7 The barracks were subsequently expanded to cover the remainder of the main ABRO site. Remaining buildings on or adjoining the site from this period include:
- The Carpenters and Telecommunications Shop (IC4), dating from c.1900, which was built onto the boundary wall and divided by two party walls to form three spaces, with the front elevation rebuilt except to the eastern 2-storey space which includes architectural detailing similar to that found on the Barracks' initial period of construction;
  - The Store (IC5), dating from c.1904, is a large open plan building built on the boundary wall. It appears to offer scant architectural value;

- The Dining Room and Cook House (IC6), dating from c.1935. This building has been modified, with modern extensions on the north elevation.
- The Restaurant/Canteen (IC7), is of the same date (1937) and design as the Regimental Institute of the Cavalry Barracks. It is a strongly formed building and it exhibits a design that is typical of a building from this period. Building IC7 houses the Colchester Archaeological Trust and Roman Circus Visitor Centre.

Buildings IC3, IC4 and IC7 together with the boundary wall and folley are considered to constitute non designated heritage assets.

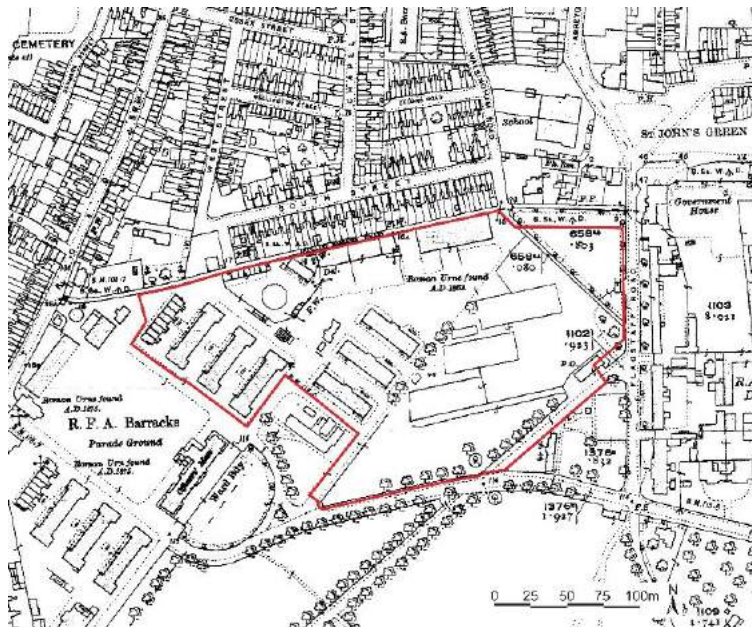


Figure 4: Historic Map (circa 1922-23)

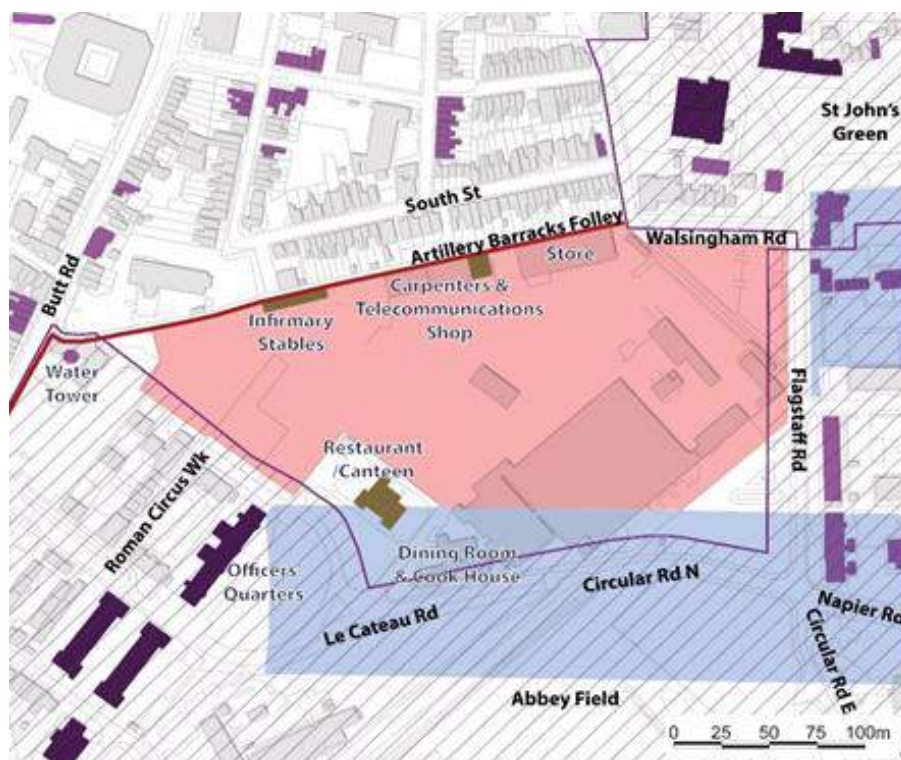


Carpenters and Telecommunications Shop

### Protected Historic Assets

- 3.8 The site lies in a historically sensitive area. Following a public consultation exercise the Garrison Conservation Area was extended (June 2021) to include the ABRO site, the Roman Circus Visitor Centre and Artillery Barracks Folley. The Roman Circus is a SAM. To the north / east of the site is Colchester Conservation Area No.1 which includes numerous listed and locally listed buildings. St John's Abbey (to the east of the site) and its precinct is a SAM.





- Emerging housing allocation
- Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Locally Listed Building
- Other building of historic/architectural value
- Garrison wall of historic value

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**Figure 5: Heritage Protections**

## Archaeology

- 3.9 The site is within an area of high archaeological importance. The buried remains of the Roman Circus SAM cross the southern part of the site. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Consent is required from Historic England for all works affecting a SAM. Early consultation is advised with Historic England on any proposals for the future redevelopment of this site.
- 3.10 The Colchester Roman Circus Management Plan (2021) provides details on how the development needs to complement and support preservation and enhancement of the Roman Circus and its setting. This document has been adopted as a planning guidance documents.
- 3.11 The site itself has not been the subject of previous archaeological investigation. There is high potential for encountering (previously unknown) important below-ground archaeological remains across this site, which could not only affect the layout of any development proposals but could also be very costly and time-consuming to deal with.
- 3.12 The following reports will be required prior to determination of any planning application:
- A heritage desk-based assessment (both direct and indirect impacts of designated and undesignated heritage assets);
  - A geophysical survey, comprising ground penetrating radar; and
  - A trial-trenched evaluation. The extent of the trial-trenched evaluation will be determined by the results of the radar survey, although a 5% sample would normally

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be expected. This should lead to an archaeological deposit model for the development site.

- 3.13 No development will be permitted within the area of the Roman Circus, or the buffer zone referred to in the Management Plan. In other parts of the site, any developer should be aware that extensive archaeological investigation is likely to be required. Such investigations will ensure that any archaeological assets within the site are safeguarded from impacts relating to any groundworks associated with the development scheme. A decision on the extent of this investigation will be based on the results of the archaeological evaluation and deposit model combined with the level and extent of the new development. As a part of any planning application, proposals should be included for the enhancement, display/presentation, promotion and beneficial management of the circus and any previously unknown archaeological discoveries on the site.
- 3.14 It is advised that the archaeological evaluation is undertaken as soon as possible and should form part of the developer's risk assessment. The evaluation work will establish the archaeological potential / constraints and will inform potential development opportunities.

### **Land Use**

- 3.15 The ABRO site was formerly part of the Royal Artillery Barracks. It is surrounded by a predominantly residential area offering a mix of house types and tenures. A small range of local shops and services can be found within the immediate walkable neighbourhood, mainly attached to Butt Road and Southway (a major road to the south of the town centre). Other neighbourhood amenities within 400m walking distance

include the neighbouring Roman Circus Visitor Centre, the sports facilities on Abbey Field, The Colchester Officers Club, St John's Green Primary School (split over two sites) and St John's Abbey Gate (visitor attraction). The nearest designated centre is the town centre just 250m from the site's northern edge.

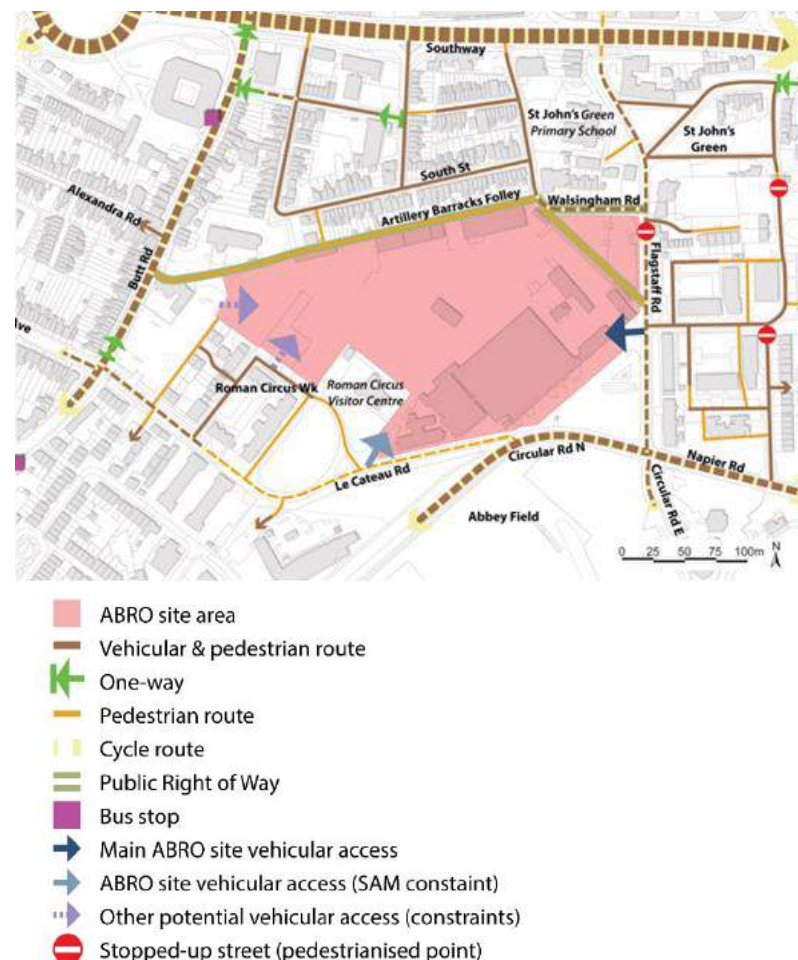
### **Accessibility**

- 3.16 The surrounding area has good pedestrian accessibility, albeit there is currently no permeability through the ABRO site due to its former military use. Improving the site's permeability is hindered by the historic Garrison wall that runs along the north boundary of the site. Some existing routes such as Le Cateau Road and, in particular, Artillery Barracks Folley suffer from a lack of self-policing due to poor overlooking by existing properties.
- 3.17 There are two Public Rights of Ways (PRoWs) that cross the site - Artillery Barracks Folley and a path between Walsingham Road and Flagstaff Road sandwiched between the main site enclosure and separate car park. The Artillery Barracks Folley is in a poor state of repair hindering its accessibility and use. As a part of the redevelopment proposals, the folley (including the historic surfacing) will need to be repaired and enhanced.
- 3.18 The area generally benefits from a good local cycle network, including the 'Garrison Cycle Route', referred to in the emerging local plan, which provides a predominantly off-road link through South Colchester to the town centre.
- 3.19 The site is about 450m walking distance from Colchester Bus Station and 675m from Colchester Town Railway Station. Bus stops can also be found on nearby Butt Road and Mersea



Road. The site is therefore well located to take advantage of services and facilities in the town centre.

- 3.20 The existing main access into the site is off Flagstaff Road and crosses a combined footpath / cycleway. Access from St John's Green is filtered allowing pedestrian and cycle access only. This restriction is designed to prevent car traffic 'rat-running' through onto Southway. Access to Flagstaff Road from the south is from Circular Road North. It is understood that there may be capacity issues at this junction, with limited scope for improvement due to the need to protect the Roman Circus SAM, the constraints of landownership and trees protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The potential scope for the improvement of this junction together with the need to safe pedestrian and cycle movements will need to be explored as a part of any future planning application.
- 3.21 A secondary right of vehicular access exists off Le Cateau Road, though part of this route is an adopted foot and cycle way which only allows for restricted vehicular access. There is an expectation that as part of the site's redevelopment, the existing road section will be removed and the Roman Circus SAM enhanced. The need to protect the SAM means direct vehicular access to the site cannot be provided from Circular Road North or Le Cateau Road.
- 3.22 There is the potential to create a new access point from Roman Circus Walk, though this is complicated by ownership, existing car parking and capacity issues.
- 3.23 Given access constraints it is strongly recommended that the developer contacts the Highways Authority at Essex County Council at the earliest opportunity.



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Figure 6: Access Analysis

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## Townscape

- 3.24 The main part of the site is currently dominated by hard-standing and large and unattractive vehicle storage/repair 'sheds'. The site has scant townscape qualities, except for remaining small-scale historic buildings (namely the Infirmary Stables, and Carpenters and Telecommunications Block), a strong northern edge in the form of the historic Garrison Wall and perimeter mature tree planting.
- 3.25 Surrounding development is a mix of old and new development. Areas to the south-west and east benefit from the retention of a significant number of listed and locally listed former Garrison buildings. New development within the former Garrison site has adopted both traditional and contemporary styles.
- 3.26 All recent developments have been positively informed by the historic setting, for example relating to the regimented layout and/or use of materials. A common trait in both new and old is the continuity of built frontage with few breaks for car parking, which instils a pleasing sense of spatial enclosure, legibility and activity to the public realm. Building heights within this part of the former Garrison are typically 2-3 storeys, with some discreet 3rd floor penthouses to new apartment blocks.
- 3.27 Outside the old Garrison, the local area is predominantly characterised by early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> terraced housing. Notable exceptions include some surviving earlier development in the St John's Green area including the landmark Abbey Gate. Two post-war office blocks (Crown Office Buildings at 6 storeys and Wellington House at 8 storeys) appear as unfortunate anomalies amidst the fine-grain low-rise local townscape.

## Landscape and Landform

- 3.28 The landscape context is heavily influenced by Abbey Field which the site abuts to the south. Abbey Field is enclosed principally by remnants of Victorian tree planting laid out as avenues and linear features. Given the former use of the ABRO site (essentially larger scale functional buildings enclosing a large hard landscaped vehicle storage compound), the site has retained an openness when viewed from within and the perimeter tree planting helps the site integrate with the surrounding area and reinforce the site's historic setting. From Circular Road East, there is a view of Jumbo, the town centre water tower (listed grade II \*).
- 3.29 Some of the Victorian tree planting around the site edges has been lost over time and, where possible, this should be replaced. The majority of the existing tree planting is protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and there will be a strong presumption in favour of retaining the existing trees.
- 3.30 The site naturally gently slopes, most noticeably towards to the north. The site also appears to have been levelled in the past to suit the former military use. This results in some moderate changes in level change, particularly with Artillery Barracks Folley to the north.





- Emerging housing allocation
- Designated open space
- Other open space
- Roman Circus SAM
- Designated green link
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO)
- Sports facilities
- Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)

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**Figure 7: Landscape Analysis**

## Other Possible Constraints

3.31 The site is likely to be subject to other constraints that have not been highlighted in the brief and these may affect detailed design, costings and delivery of any future scheme. Other constraints that will require further investigation include:

- Contamination – given the former use of the site, there is potential for the site to contain levels of contamination that will require mitigation.
- Air Quality – The site is located near an Air Quality Management Area; measures are therefore likely to be required to mitigate impact on air quality.
- Anglian Water has advised that there are several foul sewers in the vicinity of the site and a water main runs parallel to Circular Road North (outside of the road). Anglian Water has recommended that they are consulted early on any proposals that affect their assets.
- Other Underground Utilities – it is not known whether the site is affected by other service runs; and
- Ecology

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## 4 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

### Site Area and Principle of Use

- 4.1 The northern main portion of the site is 3.80 hectares and allocated for residential use in the Emerging Local Plan. The redevelopment of the ABRO site also provides a unique opportunity to expand the offer at the Roman Circus Visitor Centre which will assist with the desire of the Council and Colchester Archaeological Trust to create a significant visitor attraction. The aspirations for the expansion and enhancement of the facilities associated with the Roman circus are not seen as being prejudicial to the delivery of housing on the ABRO site and it is considered important that any new development integrates well with the existing surrounding uses. Early engagement with the Council and Trust is recommended to ensure that the respective proposals are mutually compatible.
- 4.2 The 0.46 hectare southern portion of the site, which is covered by the Roman Circus Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), is allocated for open space in the Emerging Local Plan. The allocation of this land (which includes the buffer zone of the SAM) as open space will assist with the desire to develop the SAM as an important visitor attraction.

### Quantum of Development

- 4.3 It is envisaged a net residential density area of between 45-80 dwellings per hectare (equating to 171-304 dwellings) could be accommodated; this is a reflection of the site's

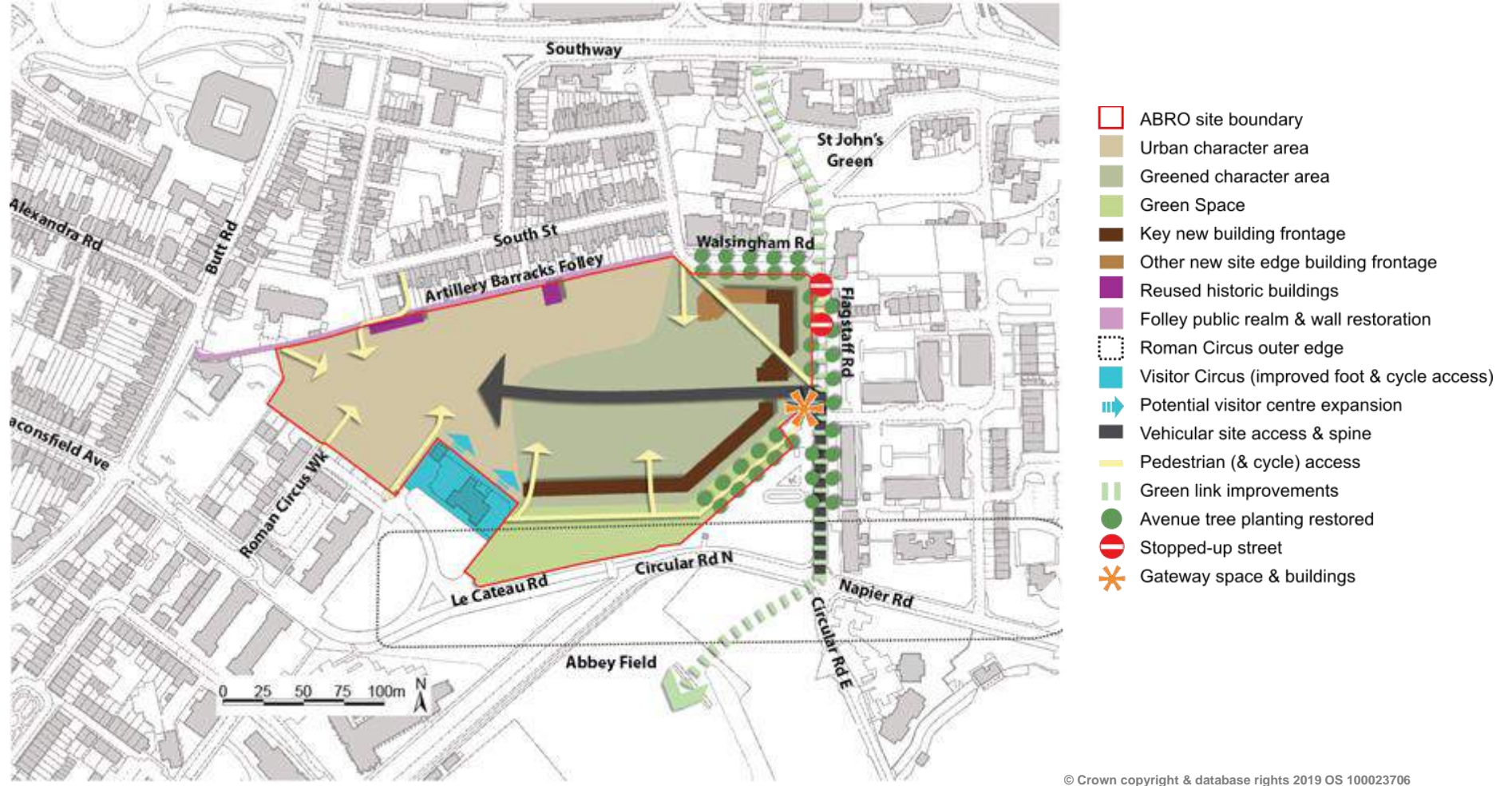
urban context and its close proximity to the town centre and public transport hubs. Densities will however need to be moderated by the specific local context including the site's heritage (above and below ground), potential highway constraints (including the need to safeguard and enhance adjoining pedestrian and cycle routes) and the need for the development to be of a high-quality design and adherence to other adopted policies and guidance. A mix of dwelling types (size and format) must be provided in line with housing need, including a good proportion of family homes, homes that are suitable for people with disabilities and homes that area capable of adaption over the long term.

### Sustainability

- 4.4 Good urban design and sustainable design and construction are mutually inclusive. Integrating the two concepts will maximise the opportunities for creating sustainable forms of development.
- 4.5 To support the achievement of sustainable development, the redevelopment of the ABRO site must be undertaken in the most sustainable way possible, delivering the Council's social and economic aspirations without compromising the environmental limits of the area for current and future generations. The development should seek to fully integrate sustainable design and construction with urban design to ensure the delivery of a high-quality new development and maximise the opportunities to enhance the environmental performance of new development, including through the use of micro generation equipment (solar panels, heat pumps), and by increasing water efficiency.

## Key Principles

4.6 The following plan, text and imagery explain the key principles needed for the site's redevelopment:





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## Roman Circus Setting

- 4.7 In accordance with the Emerging Local Plan allocation and as a condition for any housing development on the former ABRO site, public parkland will extend into the site to incorporate the Roman circus SAM and 10m minimum buffer zone from the circus's outer buttresses. This means no new development within the SAM or its buffer zone and the removal of all existing built form including roads from within this area. The resulting new open space will contribute towards the requirement for a minimum of 10% (gross) of the residential development area to be open space.



Roussillion Barracks, Chichester – attractive development frontage onto green space

- 4.8 The southern development edge to the SAM will be entirely pedestrianised to protect its setting and a new path networks

to the southern edge of the 'parkland' development should be provided to serve and to improve foot and cycle access to the Roman Circus Visitor Centre (and beyond). The development proposals must also seek to maximise the potential of the Roman Circus as a heritage attraction in line with and complementing the Colchester Roman Circus Management Plan.

## Local Open Space

- 4.9 The development proposals must provide functional open space (greenspace and/or public realm) within the residential areas that allows for and facilitate outdoor social space and connectivity as part of the green infrastructure network. Open spaces should maximise opportunities for the integration of drainage (SuDs), ecology and shading as well as biodiversity net gain. Adequate provision must also be made for local areas for play within 100m of each dwelling and that a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) within 400m of each dwelling. In addition to public areas of open space, new street and parkland trees should be planted to articulate space, frame views, soften built form and provide air quality mitigation. The Garrison Green Link must be retained and enhanced as a part of the proposed development. Open spaces must be of a high-quality design and be robust and adaptable so that they can be managed and maintained for continual use.

## Contributing to Local Character

- 4.10 Development needs to have design integrity that complements and reinforces the best elements of the Colchester's built and natural environment to provide a distinctive development that contributes positively towards local character. The new development must be carefully sited

and designed and be demonstrably based on an understanding of the townscape of the existing area. The form, scale, appearance, details and materials of the new development must be informed by, though not necessarily replicate, local characteristics, including patterns of built form, fenestration, detailing, materials, landscaping, history and contemporary living. Befitting the Garrison setting, the layout will be predominantly regimented into distinct continuous lines of buildings, rather than rely on organic layouts. Housing development in the southern and eastern parts of the site must have a verdant (parkland) character so that it integrates with the surrounding landscape and creates an increased sense of landscape buffering between the Roman Circus and built development.

- 4.11 Building frontages will generally be uninterrupted by allocated side parking which should instead be predominantly provided to the rear, with landscaped parking squares being another option where this is not possible. Where on-street parking is provided for visitors, measures will need to be taken to mitigate impact of the parked car on the street scene. The interface between building and public space (the street) must be carefully designed so that it is positive and appropriate to its context.
- 4.12 The redevelopment proposals must be informed by townscape and landscape assessment; any redevelopment proposal should seek to retain the view of Jumbo from Circular Road East. The development should also seek to integrate Crime Prevention Through Environment Enhancement Design (CPTED) and to this end, early engagement with Essex Police is recommended.



Brentwood School, Essex – contemporary architecture relating to historic buildings.

### Sustainable Densities

- 4.13 In accordance with Policy DM9: Development Densities in the Emerging Local Plan, higher densities are promoted within walking distance of the town centre and public transport hubs, subject in this instance to meeting design requirements, heritage considerations and possible highway constraints (see Site and Context Analysis – Accessibility). Densities might be maximised in various ways, including through roof gardens and balconies, efficiently integrated parking in response to the

‘urban context’, and reduced private amenity space if mitigated by adjoining spaces and pedestrianised streets offering equivalent compensatory spill-out amenity.



Accordia, Cambridge - Compact townhouses

### Context Responsive Building Heights and Forms

- 4.14 In response to the historic setting and local character, building heights should be a mix of 1-4 storeys, unless townscape and visual impact analysis demonstrates that taller buildings would not cause harm to the character of the area and any such building(s) is of an exceptional design. Buildings above three storeys in height should however be used in moderation and positively contribute to townscape punctuation. Buildings fronting the circus parkland should be 3 storeys in height to help strongly define the space and relate to the surrounding built form, notably the listed Officers' Quarters. The

development proposals must, in terms of their scale, height, mass, siting and design, be sensitive to and complement heritage assets both designated and non-designated. Building forms must also positively contribute to the historic setting, including the roofscape and skyline.



Timekeepers Square, Salford – roof forms contributing to local character

### Historic Building Retained and Restored

- 4.15 Buildings (IC3 – Infirmary Stables and IC4 – Carpenters and Telecommunications Shop) and the former garrison wall are considered to constitute non designated heritage asset. The two buildings should be retained and fully integrated into the development proposals for this site. Possible uses include residential or commercial uses that are compatible with the residential setting.





Moray Mews, London – Part-frontage to alley with obscured glazing protecting neighbour privacy

### Artillery Barracks Folley Enhancements

- 4.16 The Artillery Barracks Folley provides an important local connection route however its current condition detracts from its use. As a part of the redevelopment of the ABRO site, the folley must be improved and enhanced (including the repair of the wall and the locally distinctive paving). Consideration should be given to opportunities to improve pedestrian connectivity between the ABRO site itself and the folley. Any alteration to the wall should not however undermine the perception of the wall forming a robust barrier between the former barracks site and the residential areas of the town.

### Promoting Walking and Cycling

- 4.17 Priority must be given to pedestrian and cyclists movements and opportunities taken to improve accessibility as this will allow pedestrians and cyclists to directly access local amenities and freely move through the area in a way that offers a real choice of routes.



Goldsmith Street, Norwich – pedestrianised street offering communal amenity.

Filtered permeability (selective pedestrianisation / cycleways supported by rear/remote parking) and homezone measures, coupled with high quality usable landscaping, must be used to ensure pedestrians and cyclists are afforded priority over cars; this includes the design of the site access on Flagstaff Road.

- 4.18 Artillery Barracks Folley is not currently formally designated as a cycleway. The feasibility of upgrading the folley to an

adoptable cycleway should be explored as a part of the redevelopment of the ABRO site. In the event that it is demonstrated that this is not feasible, a cycle link should be created through the site that provides for a similar east / west connection to the folley route.

## Car Parking

- 4.19 The development will be expected to provide an appropriate level of car parking, which should reflect the guidance as set out in the Council's adopted Parking Standards. The precise parking provision will need to be informed by a clear evidence base (e.g. local car ownership census data etc), a convincing parking strategy and maximising opportunities for sharing and model shift. Should a car free development (with or without secure remote parking) be promoted or a development with a reduced parking allocation (i.e. lower than levels suggested by the adopted parking standards) measures to minimise overspill parking in neighbouring communities will need to be provided. Such measures could include car clubs, shared mobility hubs, increased cycle parking and proposals to guard against new residents using existing residential streets for car parking. All car parking must be designed so that it is attractive, overlooked, well landscaped and sensitively integrated into the proposed built form so that it does not dominate the development or the street scene. The incorporation of tree planting into parking area will also help to improve air quality and biodiversity.
- 4.20 Electric charging points must be provided throughout the development (including within communal parking areas) and should be sited and designed to avoid street clutter.



Roussillion Barracks, Chichester – Rear mews street with flats above car parking.

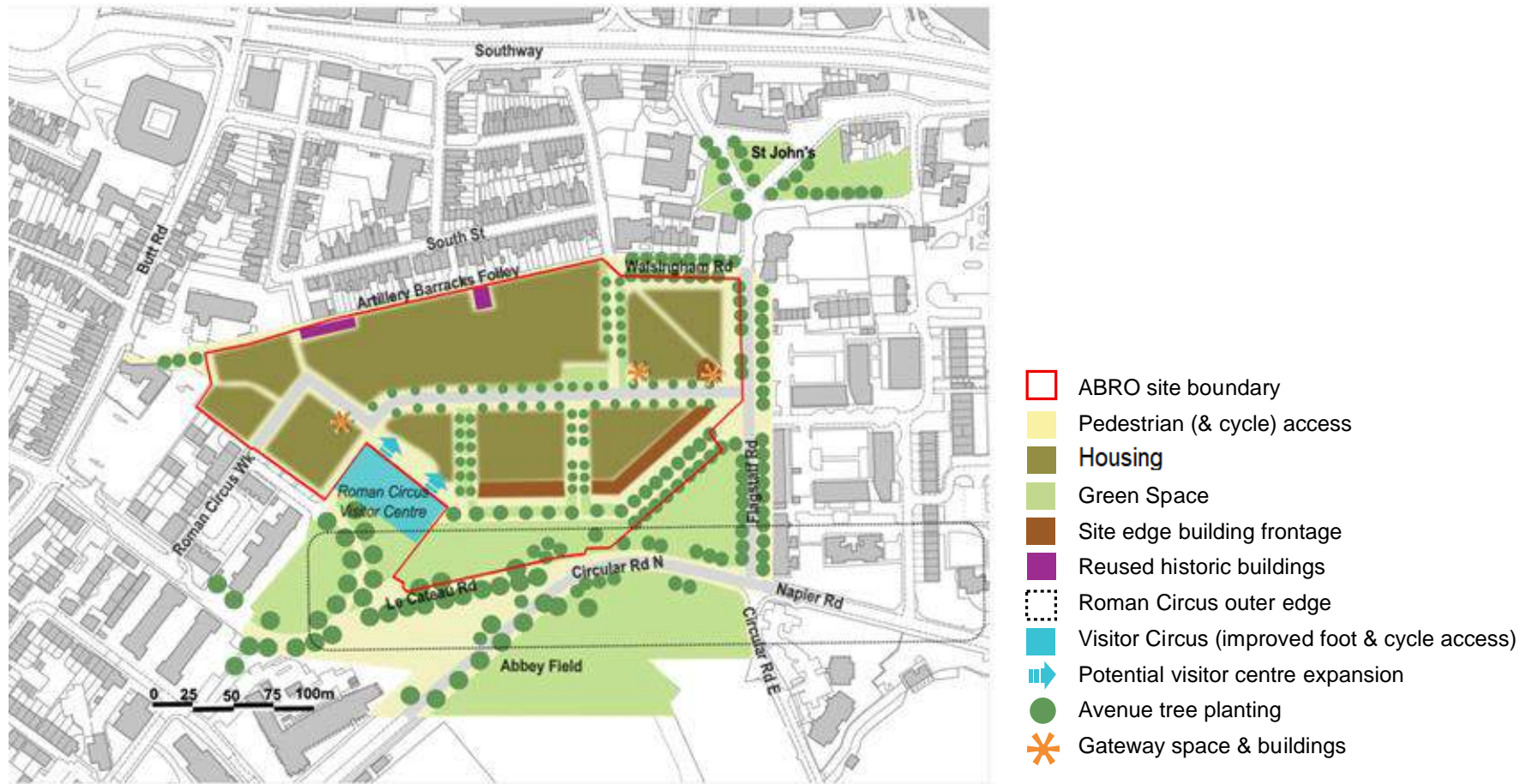
- 4.21 All dwellings must be provided with an appropriate level of cycle parking that is both secure, covered and convenient to use.

## Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees

- 4.22 The development proposal must integrate existing trees (on or adjoining the site) and ensure that they are provided with sufficient space to ensure their protection and long-term survival. The development must also incorporate new natural features (including the reinstatement of the Victorian landscape of tree-lined routes outside the Roman Circus SAM and buffer zone) to create a multifunctional network of spaces that adds to biodiversity, water management and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience. This could also be delivered through the use of features such as roof gardens, green and blue roofs and green walls.

## Indicative Layout

4.23 The following illustrative plan shows how previously outlined key principles might, as an example, suitably translate to a site layout, subject to further consideration of issues and opportunities. It lays down a design quality benchmark for considering future developer proposals even if designs creatively differ in translation and/or in response to further emerging factors.



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Figure 9: Illustrative Plan



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## 5 Development Process

### Application Process

- 5.1 The Council encourages early engagement by submission of Preliminary Enquiry (PE) and Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to discuss the detailed proposals, the scope of the application as well as contributions towards social and physical. Pre-application advice will confirm the documents required for any application submission, but these are likely to include:
- Design and Access Statement (DAS);
  - Air Quality Assessment;
  - Affordable Housing Statement;
  - Transportation Assessment and Travel Plan;
  - Archaeological Assessment and Heritage Statement - see Site and Context: Heritage: Archaeology for further details;
  - Townscape / Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
  - Sustainable Drainage and Foul Drainage Statement;
  - Biodiversity Survey and Report;
  - Daylight and Sunlight Assessment;
  - Contamination Survey; and
  - Health Impact Assessment
- 5.3 Please refer to the local validation check list at:  
[Validation List 2017.pdf \(windows.net\)](#)

### Planning Obligations

- 5.4 Future developments will be required to make a financial contribution or other obligations towards additional infrastructure facilities to appropriately mitigate the impacts of development. The precise details will be negotiated between the future developer/applicant and the Council. The contributions and/or obligations are contributions a are likely to include:
- Affordable Housing – 30% affordable housing and provide inclusive access;
  - Education;
  - Sports, Recreation and Open Space;
  - The Roman Circus - specific regard needs to be had to the adjacent scheduled monument and appropriate mitigation will be sought in accordance with the Roman Circus Management Strategy;
  - Community Facilities;
  - Highways and Transportation;
  - Health (NHS);
  - RAMs (Natural England) – to mitigate impact on the protected coastline; plus
  - All other policy requirements

### Contacts

- 5.5 For further information and advice please contact:

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